

KEEP A BIRTH RECORD OF YOUR HIBISCUS SEEDLING

- Mrs. Walter J. Baum

Hybridizing time is here. For me this means the month of November. The weather is just right for seed pods.

With paint brush in hand, I venture into my garden, feeling like a painter who has set out to paint the beauties of Nature. My canvas is the velvet top of the five stigma pads of a hibiscus bloom. This will be the female for she will bear the seed pod. My paint is the pollen from the bloom I have selected as the male. From each pollinating all hybridizers hope to get one or more seedlings that will be their masterpiece.

Records of these efforts are very necessary if we are to check back on work we have done. From these records we will know which cross is worth repeating. Above all these records will help identify each seedling and also help us in showing our seedlings in the shows.

I would like to tell you how I keep my records and hope that you may find some small part that will be of help.

Step #1 - As each hibiscus is pollinated, a piece of gummed red tape is marked with the names of the parents - female X male - and the date of the cross. This tape is attached to the female, and stays there until the seed pod is picked.

Step #2 - After pollinating for almost seven months my efforts have resulted in hundreds of seed pods. Because I have neither the pots nor the space to plant each seed individually, I plant each seed pod in a four inch pot. If the pod contains an unusual large number of seeds I use two or more pots. A tag is placed in each pot with the information found on the red tape. The same information is entered in a loose-leaf book called "The Hibiscus Stud Book."

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BIRTH RECORD (Cont'd)

Step #3 - When the seedlings are ready to go into individual containers, a tag with the permanent number is prepared for use. I use the pod number, date, and a letter to keep my seedlings marked. Example: 1-24-25A. 1-24 means January 24th. The 25 is the seed pod number. The A is the seed number in the pod. Each seed of pod 25 will be a different letter starting with A. This seedling will bear this number until a permanent name is chosen for it.

Step #4 - When the seedlings start to bloom and are entered in shows it is time to list them in my "Seedling Performance Book". This record lists seedling number, dates, shows, and results. This information helps in judging the quality of each seedling. If it is worth keeping or not can be determined by the awards it receives. Some seedlings just won't cooperate by blooming on show dates. There have been cases where a seedling has been blooming for ten years and never hit a show date.

Step #5 - When my seedling has been given a name a card is made to be placed in the alphabetical file. This card will list the name, date of cross, parentage, original number, show results, and description of the bloom and bush. The back of the card is for any remarks as to the future of that seedling. At present I have seedlings I intend to name Claudia Bird Johnson; Lyndon B. Johnson; Luci Baines Johnson; Lynda Bird Johnson; L. B. J. Ranch; and Patrick J. Nugent when the performance records are complete.

If you haven't kept records of your seedlings you should start now. It is a lot of fun.

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"Teacher: "Willie, tell me what you know about George Washington - was he a soldier or a sailor?"

Willie: "I think he was a soldier."

Teacher: "Why do you think he was a soldier?"

Willie: "I saw a picture of him crossing the Delaware - and anybody who'd stand up in a rowboat ain't no sailor."

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